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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 11 *(continued)*

Report of the Security Council (A/51/2)

Mr. Konishi (Japan): I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

In today's world, peace and stability cannot be achieved and maintained solely on the basis of political or military power. Attention to humanitarian concerns, as well as to the need for social and economic development and national reconstruction, have also come to be recognized as increasingly essential components of the effort to secure peace and stability. On the basis of this recognition, Japan is determined, as a member of the Security Council beginning next year, to contribute to the achievement of the Council's objective of ensuring peace and stability in various parts of the world.

While the United Nations Charter has entrusted the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, we must not forget that the General Assembly also has an important and meaningful role to play in this regard. It is thus important that these two bodies forge a coordinated and complementary relationship.

My delegation has on numerous occasions emphasized the need to strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Security Council by restructuring its composition as well as by improving its working methods and transparency. We continue to believe that these two aspects of reform should be addressed in a comprehensive package of measures. The entire United Nations membership should make every effort to reach agreement in the near future on concrete measures for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

For the purposes of today's discussion, however, I would like to focus on the goal of greater transparency in the Council's work and improved interaction between the Council and those States which are not members.

My delegation is gratified that the Council has in fact introduced numerous constructive changes in this regard. More needs to be done, however. Japan believes that this is an endeavour in which the members of the Council and the wider United Nations membership can, and indeed should, work together, inasmuch as improved working methods and greater transparency will benefit not only the Council but the Organization as a whole. In working towards that goal, however, care must be taken lest the Council's efficiency and the flexibility it needs in carrying out its duties be diminished. Japan intends to devote its energies to improving two-way communication between the Council and non-members when it begins its two-year term on the Council in 1997.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Allow me now to comment on some specific measures of reform in this area. My delegation continues to attach importance to the commendable practice introduced in late 1994 of briefings by the Council presidency to delegations which are not Council members. These briefings are a valuable mechanism in the effort to enhance transparency and to keep non-members apprised of developments in the work of the Council. But it is important that they provide truly substantive information and that the President hold them daily whenever the Council conducts informal consultations of the whole. Japan intends to do so when it assumes the Council presidency for the month of January 1997.

Consultations between the Council and troop-contributing countries are another area where practical arrangements are developing. We welcome, in particular, the presidential statement of 28 March 1996 (S/PRST/1996/13) outlining improved arrangements, which we hope will be implemented in a consistent manner. It is especially important that such consultations be held before the Council commences its consideration of a mission mandate in its informal consultations of the whole. During the month of its presidency, Japan will see to it that this practice too is followed. At the same time, troop-contributing countries should also be encouraged to participate more actively in these consultations by offering their own comments and ideas on policy matters.

Throughout the past year there seems to have been increased recourse to holding formal meetings of the Council which are open to non-members. Many delegations, including my own, have taken advantage of these valuable opportunities. We welcome this trend, and would encourage the convening of formal meetings in the orientation debate format before the Council begins its substantive consideration of an item.

Transparency in the work of the Council might also be achieved through the circulation of its tentative monthly programme of work as an official document, through consultations between the Council President, the President of the General Assembly and the chairmen of the regional groups, and so on. We note with appreciation that this year the sanctions committees issued annual reports, and we hope that additional measures will be considered in an effort to improve transparency in their work. Japan intends to keep these issues in mind as it participates in the work of the Council next year.

With regard to the call for the formalization or institutionalization of measures for improving the Council's transparency, my delegation is of the opinion that this question requires a case-by-case consideration, according to the merits of each of the suggested measures. While some measures might prove more effective if they were formalized, others might require the flexibility that is inherent in informal practices. Our objective in this respect should be the achievement of the best substantive results.

It has often been said that the report of the Security Council should contain an analytical component. On the other hand, it has also been argued that it is not possible, practically or politically, for the Council to agree on a narrative or post-mortem assessment of its activities. The Japanese delegation would welcome any substantive improvements in the report, and believes it is useful to that end to discuss it in the General Assembly. Even if the Council as a whole is unable to present analytical assessments in its report, the insights of its individual members could enhance the Assembly's discussion. We would therefore like to encourage Member States to present their views on the activities of the Council and to urge more Council members — current, recent and permanent — to speak on this issue. Our thanks go to the members of the Council which are doing so today.

Over the past several years, my delegation has, as a non-member, closely followed the work of the Security Council. It is well aware of the need for greater transparency in the work of the Council and for greater interaction between the Council and the general membership of the United Nations. Japan is looking forward to its membership on the Council as an opportunity to examine and explore, in practical terms and in cooperation with other members, how the Council can best respond to that need.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Mexico attaches particular importance to the report that the Security Council submits yearly to the General Assembly. In so doing, the Council discharges its obligation under Article 24 of the Charter to report to the General Assembly on measures adopted on behalf of all Member States to maintain international peace and security. At the same time, in considering such measures the Assembly is doing its duty under Article 15. This is why consideration of the report before us today is an essential communications link between the two organs.

We have noted with particular satisfaction that at this time when Member States must take important decisions on the future of the United Nations,

communication between the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly has been continuous and fluid. We hope that this practice will continue and strengthen.

We thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Wisnumurti, President of the Security Council for the month of November, for introducing the report on the period between 16 June 1995 and 15 June 1996. We are pleased that this continues an important practice that began in 1993, and that efforts are continuing to improve the presentation of the report.

We would like to refer to the first part of the report, on questions considered by the Security Council under its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Mexico has said that recourse to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter must be exceptional and should be used only after machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes has been exhausted. Of course, Chapter VII of the Charter is one of the fundamental bases of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, but using it excessively erodes the credibility of the Security Council and thereby the credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

The letter and the spirit of Chapter VII are basically different from those of peacekeeping operations, which, while not provided for in the Charter, have in their own right created special premises on which they are based. In order to preserve their effectiveness, it is essential to maintain a distinction between the two.

While recently the number of peacekeeping operations and participants in them has declined, the mandated scope of those operations has continued to broaden. The contribution of the United Nations may be decisive in various well-known conflicts. This is why we must ensure an equivalency between the mandates and the human and material resources to discharge them, particularly considering that establishing a peacekeeping operation is generally not a short-term commitment. Specifically, we must ensure that the scope of a mandate is entirely in line with the parameters that the parties to the conflict themselves agree to for accepting United Nations support. We must not forget that peace cannot be imposed.

I would also like to refer to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and agreements. We consider that cooperation must respect the regional bodies' mandates and the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. Not only is it necessary for there to be very close coordination between the United Nations presence and the presence made available by agreements and organizations, but there must also be common objectives, means and aims. The action of regional organizations must not exceed their own legal framework.

We believe that chapter 25 of the report, "Security Council documentation in working methods and procedures", is highly important, since the search for transparency and democratization in the methods of work and procedures in the Security Council will strengthen the Council's work. Not only is it natural for Member States to have an abiding interest in having a comprehensive view of the Council's activities, but they wish also to convey their viewpoints on matters that are of interest to them and affect them. This concern was clearly demonstrated in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, where various proposals were put forward, including some on the report before us today.

Our desire for greater transparency and democratization is related to the need for States Members of the Organization to contribute constructively to the work of the Security Council. Mexico has no doubt that greater support by all Members of the United Nations for Security Council decisions would enhance the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of that organ, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Accordingly, we welcome the French initiative, supported by the Council in December 1994, to hold public meetings more frequently, particularly at the initial stage of the consideration of an item. We encourage the Council to strengthen this practice. We also believe that it is necessary to use the entire potential of Article 31 of the Charter, according to which any member of the United Nations can participate without the right to vote in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council. This proposal to ensure the exercise of a right enshrined in the Charter, which was proposed by the Czech Republic in another forum, deserves our entire support.

We welcome the fact that members of the Council have agreed to the proposal that the Chairmen of the sanctions committees, should give oral briefings to interested Members of the Organization; we are especially pleased that those meetings are announced in

the *Journal of the United Nations*. We have noted that in specific cases mentioned in the introduction to the report, press releases have been issued, decisions on questions of importance have been compiled and made available to interested delegations, and oral briefings have been held for Member States.

The secondary effects of sanctions regimes are cause for concern. This question has been discussed not only in the Informal Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Peace but also in the Sixth Committee. We believe that it is necessary to strengthen the practice of listening to all the comments of States and organizations interested in the questions debated in the closed meetings of the sanctions committees.

My delegation remains convinced that it is time for the special reports provided for in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter to materialize. It would be very useful if, in the case of operations that have come to an end, the Security Council were to submit a report to the General Assembly containing a precise assessment of the achievements and the problems encountered. On other occasions, we have said also that quarterly reports from the Council to the Assembly would contribute to communication between the two. The practice of having the President of the Security Council periodically brief delegations interested in the work of that body has been very useful, as has the fact that they were announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*. We believe nonetheless that a rapporteur of the Council charged with reporting to Member States would even further enhance cooperation between the Council and the rest of the membership.

An area of primary interest to all is consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. Those who provide personnel to peacekeeping operations have a very legitimate interest in participating in decisions that could put the lives of their soldiers in jeopardy: resolutions that directly affect those who work for and often sacrifice themselves for the cause of peace. The statement made by the President of the Council last March on this question, based on an initiative by Argentina, New Zealand and a large number of other delegations, improved the important practice of consultations. We hope that this mechanism will continue to improve with experience and that in the introduction of the next report submitted by the Council to the Assembly, point (l) of the March statement will be complied with. That paragraph indicates that the Council will annex to its annual report information about meetings with troop contributors.

Let us not forget that the Security Council has no authority of its own. The Members of the United Nations have conferred upon it the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It acts on behalf of all, and not solely on behalf of its members. This underlies the Council's responsibility vis-à-vis the Assembly. We hope the measures adopted by the Council to improve transparency will be consolidated, institutionalized and expanded. We want new and better channels of communication between the Council and the Assembly, and between Member States and the Council. The maintenance of peace and security is, after all, a shared goal of all the States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): Let me begin by thanking the President of the Security Council, the representative of Indonesia, for introducing the annual report of the Council covering the period from 16 June 1995 to 15 June 1996, contained in document A/51/2.

The recent practice whereby the Council's President introduces the report to the General Assembly serves a number of purposes. First, it helps to enhance and strengthen the relationship of cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Secondly, it affords the General Assembly the opportunity to inform itself further about the activities of the Security Council and, it is hoped, the future direction of its work. Thirdly, it underscores the importance of accountability. The Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations. Therefore, it should report on its activities to the General Assembly, the most representative body of the Organization. In so doing, it assures itself of and ensures the support of the Assembly members for the activities and decisions taken on their behalf by the Council.

Since the establishment by the Security Council in June 1993 of an informal Working Group on documentation and other procedural matters, and partly as a result of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reforms, a series of steps have been taken by the Council to provide for greater transparency and increased interaction and consultation between the Council members and non-members. Those have included regular briefings by the presidency of the Council for non-members, which have now become an established practice. There is also the briefing for chairmen of regional groups. The chairmen of the various sanctions committees have occasionally briefed the United Nations membership on their closed-door activities.

Furthermore, there was an agreement to have increased recourse by the Security Council to open meetings, particularly at an early stage of the consideration of a subject. All these have added a salutary contribution to the credibility of the Security Council, but fall short of the desired openness and transparency United Nations Member States expect of the Council. Closed-door consultations continue to be the Council's preferred approach.

Another important improvement is the institutionalization of the system of consultations between Security Council members and troop-contributing countries. The mechanism that was set up in 1994 has witnessed further refinements, the latest being the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council in March 1996 on the subject. The process of improvement is a continuing one, and that needs to be so, given the increasing complexities and demands of United Nations peacekeeping operations. As a major troop-contributing country of long standing, Nigeria takes the view that consultations between troop contributors and the Security Council are not only desirable, but necessary, for the full discharge of our Charter obligations.

As part of the efforts to improve the documentation of the Security Council, the members of the Council, through its President's note contained in document S/1996/603, further clarified by the note contained in document S/1996/704, have instituted measures to help determine which items should be deleted from the Council's agenda, and when.

We wish to emphasize, however, that in matters of this nature, given the high sensitivity and importance a Member State or group of countries may attach to a particular item, the Council must make haste slowly. After all, the Council's main responsibility is the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, and not any bureaucratic rationalization.

My delegation thanks the Secretariat for the efforts that have gone into the preparation of this report. We are aware that much time and a lot of resources have gone into its production. Nonetheless, the report basically remains a compilation of the various communications received by the Council and the decisions adopted by it during the reporting period. We believe that the report should provide an analysis of the activities of the Security Council, the decisions that have been taken, and how far those decisions have evolved over time, particularly at the implementation phase. It would be very useful to know whether a particular decision has helped to move the process forward towards the resolution of the problem and what lessons, if any, could be learned. While realizing that this would involve a lot of work and enormous resources, we believe that it is the only way to have a user- and reader-friendly report on the Council's activities.

The workload of the Council in the discharge of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security continues to be heavy in the post-cold-war era. It has increased not only in volume, but in scope. Although the statistics for this reporting period, in terms of the number of formal meetings, resolutions, presidential statements and hours of consultations, show a decrease compared to the preceding 12-month period, it is still a heavy responsibility and a reflection of the changed international political environment.

Similarly, although there has been a decrease in the number of United Nations peacekeeping operations and troop levels from the record high of two to three years ago, it continues to be a critical concern of our time. The majority of peacekeeping operations currently being undertaken by the United Nations are located in developing countries. Africa accounts for a large part of this. Nonetheless, there are major crises and conflicts still raging on the continent which have not received the full attention of the Security Council. Some of these conflicts have become the responsibility of regional or subregional organizations by default. In that connection, my delegation has always adverted to the need to avoid the appearance of double standards in the Council's handling of conflicts that have the potential for undermining international peace and security. After all, international peace and security are indivisible, and that is the essence of collective security.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that if there were still any doubt about the need for reform of the Security Council in all its aspects, including its working methods and procedures and its decision-making processes, the current exercise to appoint a Secretary-General must surely have erased those remaining doubts. We ask ourselves: Where is democracy or transparency in the decision-making process if the overwhelming desire of the majority is held hostage to the political posture of one State, however powerful, and if the collective decision of an entire continent is seemingly being overridden by that posture? How do we describe the outcome of the process as truly representing the view of the international community if it succeeds in alienating a whole continent? Should we not subject the question to

a democratic voting process in the General Assembly right away? Surely the Security Council is in dire need of reform and restructuring, and we all must recommit ourselves to that undertaking in the interest of equity, justice and the democratic ideal.

Ms. Menon (Singapore): I would like at the outset to associate myself with previous speakers in thanking the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, for the submission and introduction of the report of the Security Council covering the period from 16 June 1995 to 15 June 1996.

The General Assembly has, in resolutions 47/233 and 48/264, stressed the importance of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. The role of the General Assembly, which is universal in membership, must be enhanced so that it can exercise the functions and powers assigned to it under the United Nations Charter and play an effective role.

Resolution 48/264 stressed the importance of

> "enhanced cooperation and an effective relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs, particularly the Security Council". *(resolution 48/264, para. 1)*

The enhanced cooperation and effective relationship between the two bodies can be operationalized in many ways. My delegation has stated its views on this subject in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council and in the 'Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

As resolution 48/264 recognized, one way of enhancing the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is for the Council to provide timely and more informative accounts of its work in its reports to the General Assembly so that the Assembly can have a more in-depth discussion of matters contained in the reports. The reports at present tend to be of a routine and superficial nature and are submitted to the General Assembly only once a year, in most cases long after decisions have been taken by the Council and conflicts resolved. Also, the report is only a record of the formal meetings of the Council. The routine report of the Council to the General Assembly has become just another item on the overloaded General Assembly agenda, and delegations go through the ritual each year of commenting on the Security Council report. These have become academic exercises to which little attention is being paid.

It is well known that most of the work of the Council these days is conducted in informal consultations. It would be helpful if the report of the Security Council could include some information about or a summary of informal consultations, including those with troop-contributing countries, that eventually led to a Council decision on a particular issue. An assessment or even an indication of how the outcome of the Council's decisions on an issue affected the situation in question would also be helpful. Instead of an annual report, the Council could also consider submitting periodic reports to the General Assembly after it takes important decisions, such as on the establishment or termination of a peacekeeping operation or a change in its mandate, and on the imposition or termination of sanctions against a Member State.

The current unsatisfactory state of affairs with regard to the submission of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is a reflection of a general lack of transparency and of interaction between the Council and the larger membership of the United Nations. There is a need to establish a more interactive relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council which would provide for more consultations between the Council and the general membership and hence increase the legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

It is in the spirit of operationalizing the "enhanced cooperation" and "effective relationship" between the General Assembly and Council referred to in resolution 48/264 that my delegation supported the suggested new interpretation of Article 31 of the Charter, which was proposed by the Czech Republic earlier this year in the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. This would allow for the participation of non-members of the Security Council in informal consultations when questions affecting them are being considered by the Council.

Informal consultations of the Security Council are an innovation that has evolved over the years. All the most important decisions of the Council are now made informally. Reinterpreting Article 31 to include informal consultations within its ambit would, therefore, narrow

the gap between the original intent and spirit of Article 31 and its actual contemporary implementation. Article 31 was included in the Charter precisely to reconcile the reality of great-Power leadership with the principle of sovereign equality. By so doing, it ensured that the legitimacy of Security Council leadership would be accepted by the international community. It deals with an issue that is of direct importance to the small States that make up the vast majority of Members of the United Nations. It is not unreasonable to ask for direct access to the most important decision-making process for those whose interests will be most affected by its decisions.

While the Charter confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council is by no means solely responsible for questions of international peace and security. Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter provide for the General Assembly to make recommendations on the maintenance of international peace and security. We need to look more carefully at how Articles 10 and 11 can be interpreted in the light of contemporary realities. The General Assembly, for example, has had no say in the creation of the peacekeeping operations which have been established by the Council to deal with ethnic and civil conflicts which have taken place since the end of the cold war. Nevertheless, all Member States are presented with the bill for financing the peacekeeping operations which have been established.

It would, of course, take too long if the General Assembly were to consider and decide on the creation of every peacekeeping operation. However, there must be a way for better and more structured consultations between the General Assembly and the Council before the establishment of peacekeeping operations. It is not satisfactory for the Council merely to report to the General Assembly after the event.

The vast majority of States members of this body have voiced these sentiments in the last few years in various forums, highlighting the need for improvements in the working methods, procedures and decision-making processes of the Security Council to make it more transparent and democratic. Only a truly transparent, accountable and responsive Security Council can exercise legitimate and representative leadership in the twenty-first century. We hope that these views will be considered seriously by the great Powers, especially the permanent members of the Council. They have so far not responded positively to any of these proposals. Unless they are willing to genuinely engage the other Member States on this fundamental issue of interest to all of us, the prospects for change or reform are not, in my delegation's view, very bright.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): My delegation welcomes the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/51/2), which is being submitted pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. We wish to express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for his introductory remarks to the report. Botswana attaches the utmost importance to the work of the Security Council as the principal organ of the United Nations charged with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation has had the privilege of participating in the work of the Security Council in the last two years and it therefore has an appreciation of how the decisions catalogued in this report were reached. We, however, wish it could contain more substance and give more insight into how and why certain decisions were taken instead of others, perhaps equally deserving, so that it could be better appreciated by the majority of the Member States. As it is, the report is a bare list of Security Council decisions, without any explanation of how these decisions were made or whether they were all implemented. We therefore share the frustration and the growing demand for a more substantive report on the proceedings of the Security Council.

We should not, however, let our frustration at this scanty report obscure the positive developments that have occurred in the way the Security Council operates. The Security Council has undertaken steps to increase the transparency of its proceedings. The procedures of consultation between the members of the Council and countries contributing troops to the United Nations peacekeeping operations have been further improved to allow for a more direct exchange of views between the two sides.

The presidency of the Council now conducts regular briefings for non-members on the outcome of the informal consultations of the Council as a matter of course. It should be stated parenthetically for the record that attendance at these briefings is rather disappointing. This applies with equal validity to attendance at and participation in the open debates of the Council. Furthermore, Arria-style meetings are held more frequently with non-members of the Council and

individuals whose views are important to the deliberations of the Council on any given subject of interest to it.

We are, however, the first to agree that a lot more remains to be done to improve transparency in the work of the Council. The primary objective should be more frequent and systematic consultations between the Council and the general membership of the United Nations, as the Council is carrying out responsibilities entrusted to it by the Member States of the United Nations.

Member States have demonstrated their willingness and determination to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, they have been dependable partners in the arduous task entrusted to the Security Council. In the most recent years, we have seen regional organizations assume a much greater share of responsibility in the maintenance of peace and security in their own backyards. The role of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group in Nigeria; the Arusha regional summit with respect to Burundi; and the Southern African Development Community with regard to Angola are cases in point.

It should, however, be made abundantly clear that regional arrangements cannot be expected to assume responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council alone is charged with that responsibility. There is a need for the Security Council to respond quickly and in a timely manner to emergency situations and coordinate its activities closely with those of the regional organizations.

It is important for the Council to increase the number of open meetings to enable a smooth and systematic exchange of views between the Council and non-members. In the view of my delegation, the Security Council should make it a practice to discuss reports of the Secretary-General in open meetings in order to give non-members the opportunity to contribute ideas to the subject in question. This practice could also be extended to the renewal of the mandates of peacekeeping missions.

One cannot discuss the report of the Security Council without raising the question of the reform of the Council. The Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System has been meeting for some time now and it is important that it conclude its work as soon as possible. I am sure that all Member States agree that the Working Group should not have an open-ended discussion without any prospect of bringing its work to finality. The case for an increase in the membership of the Security Council to make it more representative of the membership of the United Nations has already been made. The Working Group is bogged down in the details of the criteria for qualification for membership of the Council.

Speakers before me have suggested a number of changes to improve the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. We support many of those proposals, which include the creation of subsidiary bodies to assist the Council in its functions; the need for the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council to be revised and finalized; the need for regular meetings between the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly; and more transparency in the work of the Council sanctions committees. In general terms, what everyone is calling for is more transparency and openness in the work of the Council. We should continue to refine and build on what has been achieved thus far. The decisions taken in an open and transparent manner can only enhance the credibility and authority of the Council.

On the question of the election of the Secretary-General of our Organization, which is currently locked in a stalemate, we fully share the very apt sentiments expressed a few minutes ago by my colleague, Ambassador Ayewah of Nigeria.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this opportunity to consider the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/51/2). The Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who is this month's President of the Council, has already spoken on behalf of the members in introducing the report. This debate provides a useful occasion to consider the manner in which the Council carries out its Charter responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security and the way in which it keeps the wider membership informed of its activities.

During the period covered by this report — June 1995 to June 1996 — the Council once again had a heavy agenda. Among the more encouraging developments were the end of the war in Bosnia and the first steps towards securing the peace there; the progress towards the implementation of the peace agreements in Angola; and the consolidation of democracy and stability in Haiti. The Council has devoted a great deal of its attention to other African issues — in Western Sahara, Liberia and the Great Lakes region. The year saw decisive progress made towards the implementation of Security Council

resolution 986 (1995), which we believe is about to come to fruition.

My delegation attaches great importance to the Council's efforts over the year to develop its working methods so as to increase the transparency of its work to the membership of the General Assembly. Greater resort to open meetings of the Council has now become an established part of the way the Council works. It provides a valuable additional input into the Council's deliberations and gives members and non-members alike a greater insight into the views of the parties directly concerned on the most pressing issues before the Council. We are open to more such meetings at the initiative of the President of the Council, who is always available to Member States. This is one of the ways by which the concerns voiced by the Czech Republic, among other delegations, are being met. Other changes, such as the daily briefings offered by the presidency to non-members, first proposed by the United Kingdom, have also increased the flow of information to those outside. Regrettably, these briefings are not always well attended.

Two other important measures to enhance the Council's transparency and relations with non-members were adopted in the period under review. The first, through the presidential statement of 28 March 1996, significantly enhanced the mechanism for consultation with troop contributors, including potential contributors. Again, we hope more non-Council members will use these meetings to discuss their concerns and inject their views. The second measure, contained in the Council President's note of 24 January 1996, decided that the Chairmen of the sanctions committees should give oral briefings to non-members after each meeting. We warmly welcome both of those changes as examples of the organic, evolutionary change in the Council's working methods that has been under way for some time. We are also attentive to calls for further improvements. We will be listening carefully to suggestions made here today. The forums already exist, in the Working Groups of the Assembly, for formulating recommendations to the Council on these matters.

The Security Council, like the rest of the United Nations, confronts a number of very complex challenges with limited resources. But it has continued to undertake its responsibilities with relative efficiency, in a practical and largely harmonious manner. We will continue to work for the strengthening of the Security Council in practical ways through strengthening the conflict-prevention and peacekeeping infrastructure of the United Nations, and also through its enlargement and the development of its relations with the General Assembly.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I should like to begin by thanking the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, and by expressing our appreciation for his personal contribution to the enhancement of the Council's transparency and accountability. All those in the Assembly who try to follow the Council's deliberations closely from the outside have greatly benefited from Ambassador Wisnumurti's professionalism and integrity, and I take this opportunity to congratulate him and his colleagues for their work.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The report before us reflects an intensity in the Security Council's activity that has become the norm in recent years. The fact that a multiplicity of questions are being brought to the Council's attention is, first of all, a matter for concern, as it points to the persistence of various sources of instability in different parts of the world. Contrary to the initial expectations raised by the end of the bipolar world and the apparent reduction in the risk of a global war, resort to force in international relations continues to prevail in large measure.

On the other hand, the Security Council has been instrumental in the promotion of peace in regions that had become involved in conflicts with an East-West component, as was the case in Central America, Cambodia and Mozambique. But there are still tensions in today's international environment that resonate with echoes from a previous era in defiance of the Council's capacity to act, as is the case in the Middle East, the Korean peninsula and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the redrawing of boundaries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has become associated with freedom and democracy as much as with intolerance and cruelty. In Africa, the plight of millions of people ravaged by poverty and war confronts the international community with an often intractable combination of political, humanitarian and economic problems.

At the same time, the Council's heavily charged agenda can be interpreted as a sign of renewed trust in the possibilities offered by the Charter for the settlement of international disputes or as testimony of growing confidence in the advantages of multilateral solutions.

Indeed, the present international context seems more conducive to improved cooperation for the promotion of a safe and peaceful world, with a central role being ascribed to the Security Council.

If we take a critical look at the Security Council's present standing, however, a number of paradoxes emerge. The Security Council seems to have gained in authority, but there are important international issues that are not brought to it for decisive deliberation. The Council appears to have acquired greater influence, but several of its decisions and recommendations have been — and still are — disregarded. Its working methods have undergone changes that have been hailed as positive, yet its decision-making process is still viewed by many as non-transparent. It has become more active, even if its wisdom has not gone unchallenged.

The examination of the Security Council's report provides the General Assembly with an occasion for a debate on the Organization's role in the promotion of peace and security that can be of great value. Our objective today should be to assist the United Nations fully in tapping the possibilities created by the end of the cold war, through an open dialogue on the Council's work involving the membership at large.

As a small step to encourage constructive interaction between the Council and the General Assembly, I propose that the President of the General Assembly should take part in consultations among Council members and the Secretary-General that are of particular interest to the Organization as a whole. Additionally, it might be worth reflecting on the relationship between the Secretary-General and Council members. Most of the decisions taken by the Security Council are based on reports by the Secretary-General. This places enormous responsibility on the person who clears such texts for distribution, as well as on those who draft them. Reports must reflect a balanced diversity of viewpoints in the presentation of information, and propose options that are in conformity with the philosophy of the Charter.

In debating such reports, members of the Council should bring into play all other inputs of relevance to the situation under scrutiny. In addition to issuing presidential statements or proposing draft resolutions for adoption, the Council could enhance its own role as mediator through closer contact with representatives of the conflicting parties or fact-finding missions in the field. Diplomacy and confidence-building must take precedence over precipitate action, just as mediation must take precedence over intervention, and peaceful settlement over coercion.

Decisions involving reference to Chapter VII, whether involving military action or not, should be considered with the utmost caution. Much reflection on the subject of sanctions has taken place within the subgroup, chaired by Brazil, of the Informal Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Peace. Particular attention was given to their adverse effects on vulnerable segments of the population and possible ways of minimizing their suffering. The basis for imposing and lifting sanctions constituted a central concern, and the time-frame for their application was also debated. But the many legal, political and humanitarian aspects of the question require further thought, as does the need to give an operative meaning to the provisions of Article 50 of the Charter.

Meanwhile, the conceptual and procedural improvements that are being attempted deserve to be acknowledged, and so does the increased transparency of the sanctions committees. In this regard, a special word of praise should go to Ambassador Tono Eitel of Germany for his diligence as Chairman of the Committee established by Security Council resolution 661 (1990).

The international tribunals established by the Security Council are still struggling to bring to justice alleged violators of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. As negotiations on an independent international criminal court acquire a sense of urgency, a new consciousness with respect to the link between justice and peace is being formed, which will hopefully produce a tangible deterrent effect.

Other decisions involving reference to Chapter VII, such as those which are at the origin of present arrangements for the implementation of the Dayton Agreement in the former Yugoslavia, should continue to be closely monitored. The fact that the parties to the conflict have authorized the use of force by the Implementation Force which replaced the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) brings into existence a curious blend of coercion and consent of the parties that does not stem either from the logic of traditional peacekeeping or from a strict reading of Charter provisions. Whether or not this is a paradigm that can be applied again is a matter requiring detailed analysis.

We are satisfied to note that democracy and national reconciliation continue to make inroads in many regions

which previously experienced civil strife. Central America is a case in point. With the recently announced conclusion of the last phase in the negotiations between the Guatemalan Government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), the entire region can now hope for a future free of violence.

However, the tide of democracy and reconciliation has spread less evenly to Africa. Brazil is especially happy to see that the sister nation of Mozambique has been able to find a path of political stability, which is essential for its economic and social development. Notwithstanding this and other examples, most notably the one provided by the peaceful transition to majority rule in South Africa and its positive impact on many parts of the continent, the frequent setbacks in the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol in Angola and the recent deterioration in the evolving Great Lakes crisis demand international vigilance. In the case of Angola, it is disturbing to note that the appeals of the international community, and even the decisions of the Security Council, have gone unheeded by UNITA. It is our belief that the Organization of African Unity and other subregional groups, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, should retain an essential role in the articulation of focused international responses.

The proliferation of humanitarian emergencies calls for the definition of a collective responsibility in the face of phenomena such as mass starvation, disease and brutality. Not all such emergencies, however, include a security component. Member States should try to evolve a common understanding as to whether the necessary international response should be left to the General Assembly or the specialized agencies, or whether the Security Council needs to be activated in a particular emergency because of security aspects.

In this context, appropriate criteria may have to be developed sooner rather than later to determine under what conditions a situation should be deemed to threaten international security or is likely to endanger international peace, and when a situation can be dealt with by other organs — for example, the General Assembly. If international security appears to be endangered but the situation is not clear-cut, objective parameters may have to be established to determine whether coercive measures are admissible or not. And even when coercion is contemplated and there is no formal need to obtain the consent of the parties, their cooperation should still be sought as a matter of principle, because little success can be achieved without it.

As a country with a long tradition of tolerance among people of varied backgrounds, and with more than 100 years of peaceful relations and close cooperation with its many neighbours, Brazil is strongly committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to the principles of multilateralism. Indeed, these values are shared by our entire region and are in perfect tune with the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter. As democracy takes on stronger roots and economic development gains ground in Latin America, its capacity to extend solidarity and to seek sound, legitimate solutions for world problems can only increase.

In this regard, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the countries of our region which have participated in the Security Council's work during the period covered by this report — namely, Argentina, Chile and Honduras — for their contribution to its activities during particularly strenuous and challenging times.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): My delegation joins those who have expressed their appreciation to Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti, President of the Security Council, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

We had hoped that this year's report of the Security Council to the General Assembly would take into account the concerns of most delegations, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 48/264 and expressed in various other forums such as the Working Groups on the Security Council and on the strengthening of the United Nations system. But this was not the case. This year's report, covering the period 16 June 1995 to 15 June 1996, like previous ones, is a compendium of resolutions and decisions adopted by that important organ of the United Nations. While we agree that steps have been taken to reform the working methods of the Security Council, as alluded to by the representative of Botswana, we still believe that the report is presented in a merely ritualistic manner.

The rest of the Member States sitting in the General Assembly, on whose behalf the 15 Security Council members purport to act, are not privy to the decisions made in the numerous informal consultations which have become the norm rather than the exception. The Council continues to take decisions on matters that affect the destiny of peoples and nations in informal consultations. It is not our intention to go into detail on any of those

cases. What the rest of us get are the bare resolutions that are adopted in the Council chamber.

Apart from the fact that the reports of the Security Council should be analytical and should reflect the debates preceding the adoption of resolutions, the Council should submit such reports on a regular basis because it deals with important matters of international peace and security, affecting all of us. This would be consistent with the principle of accountability and democratic practice.

Zimbabwe fully supports the proposal made by the Permanent Representative of Colombia that this agenda item should remain open to allow the General Assembly to consider it exhaustively. It is our sincere hope that as the Assembly pursues the reform programme through the various working groups that are discussing the reform and restructuring of the United Nations, the Council's working methods would also be reformed in order to make them more democratic and to reflect the interests of the rest of the Member States of our Organization.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly's consideration of the report of the Security Council enables Member States to present their points of view on ways to strengthen the action of the Council as the organ with the primary responsibility for security and the maintenance of peace and one that acts at the same time on behalf of all States, pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter.

It is in that spirit that we believe that cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be strengthened, on the basis of Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and other relevant Articles of the Charter, in order to take account of the widespread demand for greater democratization within intergovernmental bodies.

We believe that the General Assembly, pursuant to the Charter, has a role in peacekeeping and that there must therefore be interaction between it and the Council. The latter should not, therefore, content itself with factual reports to the Assembly.

The Council's activities should be set forth in a way that will allow for an evaluation of the results achieved in the light of the means and resources employed to attain a given objective. For any action by the Council must be justified and explained not merely in terms of the goals set and the results accomplished, but also in terms of the problems encountered and the successes achieved. Lessons can then be derived from the actions undertaken so that guidelines can be laid down for future activities.

It is useful for the Council to submit reports that include sections on the decisions and recommendations of the sanctions committees and on the steps taken to improve its working methods.

Similarly, the Council should submit special reports when it establishes a new peacekeeping operation or changes the mandate of an operation already in progress.

That process should also be followed should the Council decide to impose or lift sanctions or to make any changes in their regime. In this connection, we should think of giving more effective and practical content to Article 54 in order to protect third party States from the harmful effects of sanctions on the economies. In our view, it would be appropriate to formalize consultations with States that might be affected by measures taken under Article 41, or even by the provisions of Article 42 of the Charter. Such consultations would enlighten the Council as to the consequences that might result from its actions and give it an opportunity to take the necessary steps to rectify them.

With the same goal of strengthening relations between the Assembly and the Council, periodic meetings between the Presidents of those bodies should be held with a view to engaging in a constructive exchange of views and as a means to make known the concerns of States with regard to a given item related to international security and peace maintenance.

With regard to the briefings for delegations organized by the President of the Council, we believe that they should lead to a dialogue between, on the one hand, the President of the Council or members of his delegation and, on the other hand, the participants, through a more substantial input of information on Council activities and items under discussion. Given the importance of such briefings, my delegation joins those that wish to see them institutionalized.

Further, the increase in States' participation in the Council's deliberations on items of interest to them is a legitimate demand that can strengthen the Council's action. In this connection, the consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries represent real progress.

We welcome the fact that the Council, in a presidential statement on 28 March of this year, expressed its determination to strengthen such consultations in the light of past experience.

We believe that it is important to consider improving such consultations to achieve enhanced transparency in the Council's work and an effective participation by troop-contributing countries in the decision-making process with regard to operations in which their nationals are taking part.

This is especially important since a consistent input of the opinions and viewpoints of those countries would be a basic element in enhancing the chances of success of the United Nations mission.

To that end, the institutionalization of consultations with troop-contributing countries through the creation under Article 29 of the Charter of a subsidiary organ attached to the Council might make them more regular and routine.

It should also be possible to give a broader interpretation to Article 31 of the Charter, pursuant to which the Council may invite States to participate in its deliberations when it is seized of an item of concern to them.

Furthermore, discussions open to non-member States should be held at the very outset of the consideration of a given item in order to enable to Council to take into account the proposals and views expressed. The procedure currently in effect, which provides for the participation of States at an already advanced stage in the discussions, cannot have the desired impact on the Council's final decisions.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that it is through the Council's taking account of the viewpoints of States with regard to the improvement of its working methods and of its relations with the General Assembly that its action may become more legitimate and more effective.

Mr. Karsgaard (Canada): We welcome this opportunity to review this year's activities of the Security Council on the basis of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. In our view, the debate on this item is an important occasion for all Member States to comment on the Security Council's actions and decisions. I should like to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Wisnumurti, for having introduced the report to the General Assembly.

The record of the Security Council over the past 12 months illustrates both the Council's successes and its shortcomings in responding to challenges to international peace and security.

With regard to the Council's decisions on peacekeeping operations, a fundamental guiding principle, in our view, is to ensure that mandates set by the Council are matched by adequate resources to carry them out. While the Council is increasingly sensitive to this, it has not always been entirely successful in acting accordingly, including in two cases where Canada was directly involved this year, namely, Rwanda and Haiti.

On Rwanda, the Council decided last December to reduce substantially the force levels of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) while maintaining a mandate that the remaining personnel could not possibly carry out. This led Canada to withdraw its remaining troops from the operation. Decisions like these create false impressions about what an operation can achieve, are potentially dangerous to the personnel concerned and, on balance, tend to diminish the credibility of the Council's decisions.

With regard to Haiti, we strongly welcomed the Council's decision earlier this year to continue its engagement in that country. However, the Council's troop authorization for the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) and then for its successor, the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), also fell short of what the Secretary-General indicated was required to implement the objectives of those operations. The resulting compromise, whereby Canadian troops were provided to supplement United Nations personnel, was a less than optimal solution. Again, the Council's action resulted in a mismatch between mandates and resources.

We believe that the Council should also have the courage to declare victory when the goals of an operation have been accomplished or to reconsider a United Nations presence in situations where a particular operation is not achieving the objectives for which it was created. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his recent report on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (S/1996/961), at this time of financial crisis all peacekeeping operations must be rigorously evaluated in order to determine if their mandates are still relevant and, if so, whether they can be implemented with fewer resources.

The principle reflected in that statement is a key one, and its consistent application across the board to all United Nations peacekeeping operations is essential. Just as we need to ensure when establishing peacekeeping operations that adequate resources are provided to carry out mandates, we also need to recognize when the job has been done or when we should seriously consider the merits of keeping an operation in place. We have a responsibility to ensure that scarce resources are used as effectively as possible. Rather than systematically rolling over mandates of long-standing United Nations operations, in particular the larger ones, they need to be kept under constant review as to their continuing relevance.

Finally, we are concerned about the tendency of the Security Council to rely on options outside the United Nations to respond to certain crisis situations. This is largely because the United Nations, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, still does not have the resources or capabilities necessary for it to be the instrument of choice when the Council decides to address a particular crisis. This is not the Council's responsibility alone. We continue to fail, as Member States, to provide the conceptual framework within which the United Nations, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, could develop into a more flexible instrument, more ready to respond to the various and variegated challenges facing us.

In addition to the substance of the Council's activities, my delegation would like to comment briefly also on the Council's decision-making process. We stated during the General Assembly debate on Security Council reform that progress had indeed been made in this area but that more could and should be done. This is especially the case regarding the participation of countries directly affected by an issue being dealt with by the Council.

As a committed troop-contributing country, we are particularly pleased with the enhancement this year of the Council's mechanism for consultations with troop-contributing countries. Our experience this year underlines the need to use this channel for participation in the Council's work more effectively. These consultations are beginning to show results. As both troop-contributing countries and Council members participate more actively, this instrument will undoubtedly become more useful.

We also appreciate the more frequent use this year of Council orientation debates, including those on Afghanistan, Liberia and the Middle East and on landmines. They have served as a useful means of airing international opinion on those issues. Nevertheless, however welcome these orientation debates are, they do not fully respond to the need for greater participation by interested countries in the Council's deliberations on specific decisions. When their interests are immediately involved, either as a directly affected party or as a major troop-contributing country, we believe that Member States should be able to make their case directly to the Council as a whole. This should happen virtually automatically and could include involvement in informal consultations and in deliberations on draft resolutions. Our experience with Haiti and most recently with eastern Zaire are cases in point. In each situation, we believe it would have been entirely appropriate for our delegation to have participated in Council discussions — without, of course, having the right to vote. We believe that greater participation by non-members would allow the Council to take more informed action. This, in our view, would only strengthen the credibility of the Security Council.

My delegation appreciates the efforts made this year by Council members to make their deliberations more transparent. The more consistent system of briefings for non-Council members by both the Council presidency and by the chairmen of the Council's sanctions committees provide regular and welcome channels of information on the Council's work. This is helping to make the Council's activities clearer and therefore more legitimate to the rest of the United Nations membership.

My delegation also strongly appreciates the efforts by individual Council members to keep non-Council members informed. However, we believe transparency might be further enhanced by opening to non-Council members some meetings which are essentially informative in nature. These could include, for example, certain briefings by the Secretary-General or other United Nations representatives, as well as certain meetings now held under the "Arria formula". In many cases, the substance of these communications — often on evolving issues of direct concern to non-Council members — is known after the meetings take place, but the information may not necessarily be comprehensive. In other situations this year, information provided to the Council has subsequently been made directly available to the media before other delegations have had an opportunity to be briefed.

My delegation wishes to underline that we fully appreciate the Security Council's efforts this year in carrying out its challenging mandate. Our objective in making these comments today remains to offer

constructive observations aimed at assisting the Council in meeting these challenges more effectively. To this end, the Council can count, as in the past, on the cooperation of the delegation of Canada.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): At the outset, allow me to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti, the President of the Security Council for the month of November, for his lucid and comprehensive introduction of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

The ongoing debate here today is an important occasion to consider thoroughly the manner in which the Security Council discharges its Charter responsibilities on behalf of the wider membership of the Organization, as well as to evaluate the impact of the Council's actions on various issues under its consideration.

In order to allow the General Assembly, the body most representative of the wider membership of the Organization, to consider and evaluate the activities of the Security Council, the annual report of the Council should take a totally different form. Before I present our view on how the Council's report should be prepared, let me repeat briefly the views expressed by my delegation at the fiftieth session — last year, that is — as well as at earlier sessions of the General Assembly on the report in its current form.

The current annual report, notwithstanding the great efforts made by the Secretariat in its preparation, does not adequately take into consideration the need for further transparency in the activities of the Security Council. By way of illustration, I shall mention only the following points.

First, the report is merely a compilation of documents which have already been obtained by delegations in the form of resolutions and presidential statements. It does not provide any new information. Secondly, the report does not incorporate information about the deliberations of the Council in its consultations of the whole or about the deliberations of its subsidiary organs. Thirdly, the report does not provide analysis — profound or otherwise — of the situations considered or any reasoning behind the following of certain forms of action, nor does it contain any evaluation of the impact of such action on containing any ongoing crisis. Fourthly, the report does not include information about oral presentations or briefings made by the President, by the Secretary-General and his representatives, by the chairperson of any subsidiary organ of the Council or by officials of other international or regional organizations invited to address the Council on any question under consideration in the consultations of the whole.

Egypt has been an elected member of the Security Council since January this year. The fact that we are currently a member of the Council has not diminished our enthusiasm to achieve the maximum transparency in the work of the Council. To the contrary, our membership on the Council increased our conviction that there is a need to enhance the transparency of its work in a manner that will allow the Council to undertake its responsibilities in a much better and more efficient and representative way.

For this reason, in June 1996, Indonesia and Egypt, together, submitted to the Informal Working Group of the Security Council concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions specific proposals for improving the Council's report to the General Assembly in a way that would address the misgivings directed at the report in its current form. The annual report, according to our proposals, should include, *inter alia*, the following. First, a brief summation of the process leading to the decisions of the Council, be they resolutions or statements by the President on behalf of the Council. This summation should include a brief summary of the views expressed in the consultations of the whole without revealing the names or number of delegations holding similar positions on any specific question, as well as a brief summary of all oral presentations and briefings made to the Council. Secondly, an assessment of the extent to which the Council's decisions have influenced the situation on the ground and prospects for the future. Thirdly, a brief factual summary of the informal meetings of each of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council — particularly the sanctions committees — indicating the subjects under consideration and the major trends in views leading to the formulation of decisions.

The proposals presented by my delegation, with Indonesia, in this regard, are not going to lead, as some members of the Council suspect, to a decrease in the efficiency of the Council and a limitation in the ability of Member States to express their views freely in the consultations of the whole. On the contrary, we believe it will make the Council a body truly representative of the United Nations membership as a whole.

The mere fact that the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly has been sharply criticized in

our debate on this same item in the last few years is a clear indication that something has to be done in this area, in addition to what the Council has been able to achieve in other areas. This would require a collective political will to be transparent and to work in conjunction with the whole membership of the United Nations, as represented in the General Assembly.

In keeping with our thinking about the annual report to the General Assembly, the two delegations, Indonesia and Egypt, believe that the time has come to begin the fair implementation of Article 24 of the Charter by defining the cases in which the Security Council should present special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration. These cases should, *inter alia*, include the following. First, situations in which the Council is unable to discharge its responsibilities due to lack of unanimity among its permanent members. In this context, my delegation would like to support and endorse what the Ambassador of Nigeria said this afternoon on the abuse of the veto and the attempts to extend and stretch the veto and its scope of application to matters beyond the maintenance of international peace and security, such as the appointment of the Secretary-General, with which we are now faced. Secondly, situations in which the Security Council decides to establish a new peacekeeping operation, to change substantively the political, civilian or military component of an existing peacekeeping operation or to significantly change the mandate entrusted to an existing peacekeeping operation. Thirdly, situations in which the Security Council decides to withdraw or terminate an existing peacekeeping operation before it fulfils its political or military mandate. Fourthly, situations in which the Security Council authorizes a State or a group of States to undertake a military operation on its behalf. Fifthly, situations in which the Security Council decides to impose sanctions on any State Member of the United Nations. On all these occasions, my delegation believes, the Security Council should present a special report to the General Assembly.

This is not an exhaustive list and it is, of course, open to further examination and reconsideration with a view to establishing the correct reporting mechanism in such important cases.

Having outlined our perception of the reporting mechanism, allow me to move on to actions taken by the Council during the past year with a view to achieving greater transparency. In this context, I would like to register our satisfaction with the adoption of the presidential statement establishing procedures to improve the arrangements for consultations and exchange of timely information with troop-contributing countries. We believe this should be done in an enhanced way, in accordance with the provisions of Article 44 of the Charter. My delegation would like to stress that the information shared during these meetings should also be reflected in the Council's report to the General Assembly.

It is also a source of satisfaction to my delegation to note the increased number of open meetings of the Council to discuss critical issues with a view to providing the Council with a general orientation on the basis of the opinions of the wider membership of the United Nations.

The work of the informal Working Group of the Security Council concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions should continue to examine all proposals submitted by States members of the Security Council, taking duly into consideration the observations made in the debate on this agenda item as well as the observations made in the ongoing debate in other General Assembly forums concerned with the work of the Security Council, with a view to recommending to the Security Council the adoption of a new format for its annual report to the General Assembly and a list of cases that should be the subject of special reports from the Council to the Assembly.

Once again, we need a strong political will to achieve maximum transparency and the requisite conceptual rationalization. Egypt shall remain committed to working with other members of the Council and of the United Nations to achieve this goal. We hope that the report of the Security Council to the fifty-second session of the Assembly will mark the beginning of a new era of enhanced transparency and enhanced comprehensiveness in the work between the Council and the Assembly.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to express my appreciation to the Ambassador of Indonesia who, as the current President of the Security Council, introduced the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. My delegation has reviewed the report, contained in document A/51/2, covering the period from 16 June 1995 to 15 June 1996. The report has been submitted to the Assembly in accordance with Articles 24 and 25 of the Charter, which entrust the General Assembly with the function of the overall review of the work of the Organization.

The Charter in fact authorizes the Assembly to receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council. Despite various special functions

undertaken by the Council, particularly in recent years, the General Assembly has received no special report from the Council. It seems imperative that the conditions for submitting special reports by the Council be further elaborated and defined. We believe that it is the task of the General Assembly to prepare and adopt a guideline on that subject. Needless to say, special reports of the Council can improve the relationship between the Council and the general membership.

On the other hand, the annual reports of the Council have been drafted so as to leave no room for their consideration. A report which is in fact a compilation of symbols, resolutions and chronologies of issues already available to Member States — and more easily accessible through existing computerized channels — needs no consideration. What we are considering now is, rather, the ways and means through which the reporting methods and procedures of the Council would be improved, so that the minimum expectations of those Members not represented in the Council can be met. The General Assembly should truly be able to fulfil its duty in conducting a thorough and comprehensive consideration of the Council's report, provided that the content of the report is of a substantive nature.

It seems that the main idea behind the respective Articles of the Charter concerning the obligation of the Council to submit reports to the General Assembly is to ensure that those Members not represented in the Council are fully informed of its activities. It is, however, extremely doubtful whether such an idea has ever been realized. According to the present report of the Council, the Council held 240 consultations of the whole, totalling some 377 hours, during the covered period — far more than the formal meetings held in the same period. In spite of the focus on the consultations of the whole, no information has appeared in the annual report of the Council on those consultations. The report is rather more interesting in what it conceals than in what it reveals.

Now, the main avenue available to all non-members of the Council wishing to be informed of the informal consultations is to attend the briefings by the Council's presidency, which are totally dependent on the individual approach of the Council's President of the moment. In our view, these briefings can be conducted in writing and reflected in the annual report of the Council after necessary processing.

The great majority of Member States have frequently emphasized in various meetings of the United Nations that the reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be comprehensive and substantive in nature. If the Council does not react positively to the desire of the majority, its credibility will face serious damage. The Council cannot claim that it is functioning on behalf of the general membership while it ignores the very legitimate and Charter-based requests of Member States. The Security Council should, in fact, attempt to gain the confidence and trust of the general membership so as to be able to act on its behalf.

Since the discussions on the annual reports of the Council to the Assembly began just a few years ago, the general trend shows dissatisfaction with the content of the reports. In our view, this dissatisfaction emanates mainly from the lack of transparency in the work of the Council and of its accountability to the entire membership.

Moreover, the proper and effective functioning of the Organization requires enhanced cooperation and a concrete relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs, particularly the Security Council. The General Assembly, as the main organ in which all Member States are represented, should be more empowered in performing its duties and exercising the powers assigned to it under the Charter. Discussions in the Assembly and the desires of Member States clearly demonstrate that the General Assembly is prepared to receive and consider comprehensive and substantive reports from the Council. The appropriate ways and means to facilitate this task should be further elaborated.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): The report of the Security Council to the General Assembly and its consideration by the Assembly constitute an important part of the General Assembly's activities. It is important that the Assembly receive, at least once a year, a comprehensive factual account of the work of the Security Council. This provides an opportunity for assessing and generally reflecting on the work of the Security Council and the Organization as a whole in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security — that is, with respect to the main purpose of the United Nations.

The delegation of Slovenia wishes to join all those who have expressed appreciation to the President of the Security Council for this month, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, for his introduction of the report. We are gratified to see that the practice of the oral introduction of the report by the President of the Security Council, initiated in 1993 by Brazil, is continuing. We consider this practice to be an important

element of the efforts to develop relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly pursuant to and in accordance with the requirements of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter.

The report of the Security Council to the General Assembly contains a large amount of relevant and useful information. It is also a systematic document which helps all those who need the information on the work and on the decisions of the Council. It is, as the President of the Security Council explained this morning, a guide to the activities of the Council to be read in conjunction with other official documents of the Security Council. Our consideration of the report provides an opportunity for all those who may wish to comment on one or another aspect of the Council's work to do so.

Furthermore, the report provides information of general importance. Thus, for example, in the current report we find general information about the work of the Council and about the evolution of its methods. It is interesting to note that the number of formal meetings, resolutions and presidential statements is significantly lower compared with the preceding period. The same trend characterizes the informal consultations.

These trends are important because they could diminish a legitimate concern which had been expressed previously, namely that the growing number of Security Council resolutions — a phenomenon which we had been witnessing for several years — and statements was devaluing their importance, while the number of hours spent in informal consultations appeared to reveal a tendency towards micromanagement. It goes without saying that such concerns have to be measured against the background of the actual needs in the domain of the maintenance of international peace and security and of the situations of which the Council is seized. General figures, therefore, cannot tell the whole story.

However, general information reflected in the introductory part of the report provides an important indication on the dynamics of the work of the Security Council. The trends reflected in this general information this year should be welcomed.

In the period covered by the current report, the practice of the Security Council has been characterized by certain improvements. The practice of holding open orientation debates, based on a concept presented by France about two years ago, has been developed further. It provided several opportunities for United Nations Member States to participate in the discussions which precede the negotiations and decision-making in the Security Council. Furthermore, it also helped in clarifying the distinction between a debate, which can benefit from the variety of views expressed by Member States, and negotiations on resolutions, which remain the responsibility of the members of the Security Council.

The transparency of the work of the Security Council has been improved to some extent as a result of briefings by the President, improvements in the work of the sanctions committees and other methods, including the improved arrangements for consultations and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries. These improvements ought to be welcomed. However, the need to bring the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly closer to the requirements of the Charter continues to exist, and more needs to be done.

The practice of reporting by the Security Council to the General Assembly should be developed further and the existing proposals should be given adequate consideration. Special reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly, envisaged in Article 24 of the Charter, should be submitted when necessary. Furthermore, the Security Council could report to the General Assembly more often, perhaps twice a year or perhaps once every three months. A more frequent consideration of Security Council reports by the General Assembly would contribute to the further enhancement of the relationship between these two principal organs of the United Nations and thus to a more complete implementation of the Charter.

The need to make the reports of the Security Council more substantive and user-friendly continues to exist. Moreover, it would be very helpful if such reports contained an assessment of the situations of which the Council is seized. We listened with great interest to the proposals made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt in this Assembly a short time ago. We hope that some progress can be made along the lines he set out in his statement. However, it is also clear that these needed assessments cannot be expected from the Secretariat. It seems also that the Security Council alone cannot devote the time necessary for the collective formulation of such assessments. A convincing argument can be made that the assessment of the situations is already expressed in the resolutions and presidential statements.

This may lead to the conclusion that other methods should be developed. We believe that a more substantive assessment of issues of world peace and security can emerge as a result of an intensified communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Specific proposals, such as the one voiced by Egypt about a year ago to create joint mechanisms of the two organs to address similar situations, deserve further serious consideration. At the level of reporting, a similar approach could be developed. The General Assembly could establish a working group to study the report of the Security Council before its consideration by the whole Assembly. Such a preparatory process would help the General Assembly in focusing its discussion and the Security Council in providing all the necessary information to the General Assembly. Active involvement of the General Assembly in such a process would represent also one of the ways towards the further revitalization of the General Assembly.

Such interaction would result in clearer identification of the most relevant thematic issues before the Security Council and could contribute to an improvement in the quality of its work. Given the political nature of reporting, it can be expected that improvements in that domain would have a beneficial effect on the work of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security in general.

I have confined my remarks to some of the general aspects of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Our delegation will address specific situations under other agenda items. It seems essential that the present occasion should be used for the clearest possible identification of the basic elements of the desired relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This is, in our opinion, the main value of the agenda item currently under consideration.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 11.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.